

Today's News - Thursday, September 19, 2013

- Wigglesworth issues an eloquent rallying cry for "the profession to stop kowtowing to clients and start setting the political agenda: We need to lead the resistance against the privatization of public space, the poorly planned, the cheap and the undersized."
- Flint reports on a major new report about the mega-project, perhaps too often considered "the white elephant, the boondoggle, never on time, always over budget - maybe we're not judging them on the right criteria."
- Q&A with one of the authors of the mega-project report: "Don't go along with the myths, or whims of politicians who have a gut feeling."
- Speaking of mega-projects, Betsky bemoans the rebuilt World Trade Center as "boring": "we are building forgettable structures"; 1WTC "might have been elegant, but a combination of value engineering and paranoia about terrorism attacks leached just about anything elegant out of the structure."
- Russell rues Amazon's new Seattle HQ being "cursed by dullness," with a glimmer of hope found in an "injection of engineering bling" that "hints at the energy that could jolt the entire complex to life."
- Kamin takes on the critics of the Illinois State Capitol's west wing restoration: it was "worth every penny" despite the state's troubled budget - it is "a shining example of seamlessly combining the practical and the aesthetic."
- Brussat bristles when critics use an "absurd argument" to oppose a proposed "modest yet elegant welcome center" to replace an ugly tent and porta-potties at Newport's famed The Breakers.
- A new report indicates that Australia may have too many designers to meet the "the realistic demands for design services."
- At least they now have a new (another?) design organization "to advocate Federal and State Governments to formally recognize building design as a profession."
- Woodman and Wilson report from the Lisbon Architecture Triennale: "mix of spectacle and social radicalism...has the feeling of an institution in search of an identity" + a sometimes heavy curatorial hand "can come across as an intellectual exercise that is an end in itself. I did start to rue the lack of a bit of built-stuff as ballast" (both w/great pix, though).
- Melâneo reports on Mendes da Rocha's Coach Museum, Lisbon's "empty treasure chest," and why it is "stuck in suspended animation" - with stunning (though often sad) photos by Cera.
- Johnson Fain and Rios Clementi Hale tapped to transform Philip Johnson's Crystal Cathedral campus in California.
- Eyefuls of Chipperfield's photography museum for Marrakech.
- ASLA launches The Landscape Architect's Guide to Boston, a (fabulous!) new website "reveals Boston's role as an urban innovator."
- Eyefuls of the Emporis Skyscraper Award winners, led by MAD's "Marilyn Monroe" in Mississauga.
- Yesterday, Litman took issue with the word "issues"; today, FAT's Holland "shares a handy list of words that architects should avoid" to achieve "a 100% jargon free life in architecture."
- Call for entries: EOI to redesign London's Natural History Museum grounds.

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Power to the architects: Sarah Wigglesworth calls on the profession to stop kowtowing to clients and start setting the political agenda: Our leadership skills are weak and we have failed to bring the public with us in arguing for investment in the environment that matters...We need to lead the resistance against the privatisation of public space, the poorly planned, the cheap and the undersized... - BD/Building Design (UK)

Are Mega-Projects Really As Bad As Everyone Says? It's hard to build anything ambitious these days without being second-guessed. But maybe we're not judging them on the right criteria: "Mega-Projects: Lessons for Decision-Makers"...found that most were actually close to being on time and on budget...the major takeaway: Big projects need to be judged for how they meet objectives over time, amid shifting societal, political, and environmental values. Measuring the success of a mega-project is not linear. By Anthony Flint- The Atlantic Cities

Looking at transit success and failure: Q&A: Harry Dimitriou/Omega Centre, Bartlett School of Planning [re: mega-projects]: "My first point is how little we learn from the lessons of the past...pick up lessons that matter. Don't go along with the myths, or whims of politicians who have a gut feeling." - Globe and Mail (Canada)

A fresh vision for Lake Shore East: Imagine the possibilities if the deteriorating Gardiner Expressway was brought down to earth...restoring the sunlight to Lake Shore Blvd.: Rather than repeat past failures, we must seize the huge potential...That will require a boldness that doesn't come easily in usually timid Toronto...Yet, in a world where cities must compete...there's no option but urban excellence. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

How Did the Rebuilt World Trade Center Become Boring? To commemorate a nation's strength and resilience, we are building forgettable structures: "Freedom Tower"...renamed One World Trade Center...might have been elegant, but a combination of value engineering and paranoia about terrorism attacks...leached just about anything elegant out of the structure. By Aaron Betsky -- Daniel Libeskind; David Childs/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Santiago Calatrava-Architect Magazine

Amazon Towers, Paul Allen's Geek Zone Cursed by Dullness: Three glass domes set to rise like cartoon idea bubbles can't save Amazon.com's new Seattle headquarters from terminal dullness: Does this mediocrity matter? Seattle is a creative-class capital...Why must architecture go missing? ...injection of engineering bling...hints at the energy that could jolt the entire complex to life...dullness can be a curse. By James S. Russell -- NBBJ; Callison; LMN Architects [images]- Bloomberg News

Illinois State Capitol rehab worth every penny: Restoration of west wing to its original grandeur ensures a people's house for centuries to come: ...there is an undeniable tension between the Capitol's transcendent beauty and the state's troubled budget...raises the larger issue of what we expect from our public buildings...a shining example of seamlessly combining the practical and the aesthetic. By Blair Kamin -- Alfred Henry Piquenard (1888); J. Richard Alsop III; Henneman Engineering; Vinci Hamp Architects; EverGreene Architectural Arts [images]- Chicago Tribune

A fight over 'false history' in Newport: ...proposed welcome center for The Breakers...with its tiny footprint and modest yet elegant design...has been rejected...absurd argument -- "false history." That got my dander up, even more than their refusal to see the plain common sense of replacing, at last, the ugly tent and portajohns with a modest and lovely welcome center. By David Brussat -- Richard Morris Hunt (1895); Alan Joslin/Epstein Joslin Architects [images]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Does Australia have too many designers? A Design Institute of Australia discussion paper has revealed that the total number of designers in the country far outstrips the realistic demands for design services. - Architecture & Design (Australia)

New voice for building designers with creation of National Alliance of Building Designers (NABD): ...one of the first priorities for the newly formed group to advocate Federal and State Governments to formally recognise building design as a profession. - Architecture & Design (Australia)

Lisbon Architecture Triennale: Close, but not close enough: Close, Closer's mix of spectacle and social radicalism does not entirely convince: ...has the feeling of an institution in search of an identity...I am still at a loss as to what the city's ambitions are in throwing such a jamboree and who the intended audience might be. By Ellis Woodman -- Beatrice Gallilee [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

[Zoom in or zone out? Close, Closer: the Lisbon Architecture Triennale is low on building count and high on story-telling, performance and socially engaged practice: ...the curatorial hand lies quite heavy at times...can come across as an intellectual exercise that is an end in itself, with the engagement of any "publics" rather buried under all the rhetoric...I did start to rue the lack of a bit of built-stuff as ballast... By Rob Wilson -- Beatrice Galilee \[images\]- Uncube magazine \(Germany\)](#)

[The Empty Treasure Chest: Mendes da Rocha's Coach Museum in Lisbon: ...stuck in suspended animation -- waiting for completion funds that may never come...Paula Melâneo reports on the issues around this major new building, with photos by Nuno Cera. \[images\]- Uncube magazine \(Germany\)](#)

[Two architecture firms chosen to transform Crystal Cathedral: From the 24 firms which responded to the diocese's request for proposals, Johnson Fain and Rios Clementi Hale Studios were chosen to work on the renovation of the 34 acre, seven-building campus...renamed 'Christ Cathedral.' -- Philip Johnson \(1980\)- Catholic News Agency \(CNA\)](#)

[David Chipperfield to design photography museum for Marrakech: the world's largest free-standing museum dedicated to photography is set to be built in Morocco...Marrakech Museum for Photography and Visual Art \(MMPVA\)... \[images\]- Dezeen](#)

[ASLA Launches The Landscape Architect's Guide to Boston: New Website Reveals Boston's Role as an Urban Innovator: ...expert commentary and more than 1,100 photos provided by 28 landscape architects. \[link to guide\]- American Society of Landscape Architects \(ASLA\)](#)

[Absolute World Towers Win Emporis Skyscraper Award: ...head-turning towers, nicknamed the 'Marilyn Monroe' in Mississauga, Canada...second-place is Al Bahr Towers in Abu Dhabi; third place Burj Qatar; Calgary's The Bow In 4th Place. -- MAD/Burka Architects; Aedas; Ateliers Jean Nouvel; Foster + Partners/Zeidler Partnership Architects \[slide show\]- Huffington Post Canada](#)

[15 steps to a 100% jargon free life in architecture: FAT's Charles Holland shares a handy list of words that architects should avoid if at all possible: I describe myself as a recovering jargon abuser. But with the help of this list I'm slowly getting better...- BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

[Call for entries: Expressions of Interest/EOI: Natural History Museum Civic Realm Competition \(international\): redesign and re-imagine the much-loved London museum's grounds; EOI deadline: October 28- Malcolm Reading Consultants](#)



[-- Travel guide: London: ...some of the most significant projects in contemporary London architecture, with a wink at some of the city's classics and an exquisite selection of hotel and restaurant tips.](#)

[-- Zaha Hadid Architects: ...the uncrowned queen of contemporary iconic architecture. Her buildings practically scream, "I'm a Hadid."](#)

[-- Eisenman Architects: Cidade da Cultura de Galicia, Santiago de Compostela, Spain](#)

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